

**DISTRICT OF  
COLUMBIA  
MUNICIPAL  
REGULATIONS  
for  
PHYSICAL  
THERAPY**

## CHAPTER 67      PHYSICAL THERAPY

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### **6700      GENERAL PROVISIONS**

6700.1      This chapter shall apply to applicants for and holders of a license to practice physical therapy.

6700.2      Chapters 40 (Health Occupations: General Rules) 41 (Health Occupations: Administrative Procedures) of this title shall supplement this chapter.

### **6701      TERM OF LICENSE**

6701.1      Subject to § 6701.2, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of January 31<sup>st</sup> of each odd-numbered year.

6701.2      If the Director changes the renewal system pursuant to § 4006.3 of chapter 40 of this title, a license issued pursuant to this chapter shall expire at 12:00 midnight of the last day of the month of the birthdate of the holder of the license, or other date established by the Director.

### **6702      EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

6702.1      Except as otherwise provided in this subtitle, an applicant shall furnish proof satisfactory to the Board that the applicant has graduated from a professional physical therapy education program accredited by an agency recognized for that purpose by the United States Department of Education, or which is approved by the Board, in accordance with § 504(j) of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.04(j)).

6702.2 An applicant shall submit with a completed application an official certified transcript of the applicant's educational record and certificate of graduation from the educational institution

**6703 APPLICANTS EDUCATED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES**

6703.1 The Board may grant a license to practice physical therapy to an applicant who has been educated outside of the United States if the applicant meets the following requirements:

- (a) Provides satisfactory proof that the applicant's education is substantially equivalent to the requirements of physical therapists educated in an accredited education program as determined by the Board;
- (b) Passes the Board-approved English proficiency examination if the applicant's native language is not English; and
- (c) Passes the examination approved by the Board.

6703.2 For purposes of this section, "substantially equivalent" means that the applicant for licensure educated outside of the United States shall have:

- (a) Graduated from a physical therapy education program that prepares the applicant to engage without restriction in the practice of physical therapy;
- (b) Provided written proof that the applicant's school of physical therapy education is recognized by its own ministry of education or equivalent governmental authority;
- (c) Undergone a credentials evaluation as directed by a Board that determines the candidate has met uniform criteria for educational requirements as further established by rule; and
- (d) Completed any additional education as required by the Board.

6703.3 **[DELETED]**

6703.4 The Board may interview an applicant under this section to determine whether the applicant's education or training meets the requirements of the Act and this chapter.

6703.5 If a document required by this chapter is in a language other than English, an applicant shall arrange for its translation into English by a translation service acceptable to the Board and shall submit a translation signed by the translator attesting to its accuracy.

**6704 LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION**

- 6704.1 An applicant for licensure as a physical therapist by examination shall initiate the application process by submitting a completed application together with the appropriate application fee and the documentation required by § 6702.2.
- 6704.2 An applicant for licensure as a physical therapist shall have pre-approval from the Board before taking any licensure examination.
- 6704.3 An applicant for licensure by examination must take and pass a Board-approved national licensure examination in physical therapy (the national examination) and a Board-approved District of Columbia licensure examination in physical therapy (the District examination).
- 6704.4 Following approval from the Board to take the applicable examinations, the applicant may take the national examination and the District examination in any order.
- 6704.5 The passing score on the national examination shall be determined by the body administering the examination.
- 6704.6 The District examination shall be a written examination, developed and administered by the Board or a body approved by the Board, on laws and rules pertaining to the practice of physical therapy in the District of Columbia.
- 6704.7 The District examination may consist of questions on District of Columbia laws pertaining to physical therapy including the Act, this chapter, and chapters 40 and 41 of this title. The passing score on the District examination shall be determined by the Board.
- 6704.8 An applicant for licensure who does not pass either examination on the first attempt must seek and obtain Board approval for any subsequent attempts to retake the examination. Before the Board may approve an applicant for subsequent testing beyond three (3) attempts, an applicant shall submit proof satisfactory to the Board of having successfully completed any remediation as determined by the Board.
- 6704.9 If the Board determines that an applicant has engaged in or has attempted to engage in conduct that subverts or undermines the integrity of either the national examination process or District examination process, the Board may disqualify the applicant from taking the examinations. Examples of such conduct may include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Utilizing in any manner recalled or memorized examination questions;
- (b) Failing to comply with all test center security procedures;
- (c) Attempting to communicate with other examinees during the test; or
- (d) Copying or sharing examination questions or answers or portions of questions or answers.

6704.10 All occurrences of any violations set forth in § 6704.9 shall be recorded in the official records of the Board. Board action may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Disqualifying test results of the applicant's examinations;
- (b) Disqualifying the applicant, permanently or for a specified period of time, from eligibility for the examinations;
- (c) Disqualifying the applicant, permanently or for a specified period of time, from eligibility for licensure;
- (d) Revocation, suspension, or imposition of probationary conditions on a license issued to the applicant.

**6705 [DELETED AND RESERVED]**

## **6706 CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

6706.1 Subject to §6706.2, this section shall apply to applicants for the renewal, reactivation, or reinstatement of a license for a term expiring January 31, 1991, and for subsequent terms.

6706.2 This section shall not apply to applicants for the first renewal of a license granted by examination.

6706.3 A continuing education credit shall be valid only if it is approved by the Board in accordance with § 6707.

6706.4 An applicant for renewal of a license shall submit proof pursuant to § 6706.7 of having completed four (4) continuing education units or forty (40) hours of approved continuing education credit during the two-year period preceding the date the license expires.

- 6706.5 To qualify for a license, a person in inactive status within the meaning of § 511 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.11) who submits an application to reactivate a license shall submit proof pursuant to § 6706.7 of having completed two (2) continuing education units or twenty (20) hours of approved continuing education credit for each license year after January 31, 1989, that the applicant was in inactive status.
- 6706.6 To qualify for a license, an applicant for reinstatement of a license that has expired pursuant to § 512(b) of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.12(b)) shall submit proof pursuant to § 6706.7 of having completed two (2) continuing education units or twenty (20) hours of approved continuing education credit for each year after January 31, 1989, that the applicant was in an expired status, up to a maximum of ten (10) continuing education units or one hundred (100) hours.
- 6706.7 An applicant submitting proof of completion of continuing education units shall submit the following information with respect to each program:
- (a) The name and address of the sponsor of the program;
  - (b) The name of the program, its location, a description of the subject matter covered, and the names of the instructors;
  - (c) The dates on which the applicant attended the program;
  - (d) The hours of credit claimed; and
  - (e) Verification by the sponsor of completion, by signature or stamp.
- 6706.8 If an applicant for renewal of a license fails to submit proof of having completed continuing education requirements by the date the license expires, the applicant shall not practice until his or her license has been renewed.
- 6706.9 An applicant for renewal of a license who fails to submit proof of having completed continuing education requirements by the date the license expires may renew the license up to sixty (60) days after expiration by submitting proof pursuant to § 6706.7 and paying the late fee.
- 6706.10 If an applicant for renewal of a license fails to submit proof of completion of continuing education requirements or pay the late fee within sixty (60) days after the expiration of the applicant's license, the license shall be deemed to have lapsed and the applicant shall be required to apply for reinstatement pursuant to § 512 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.12).
- 6706.11 The Board may, in its discretion, grant an extension of the sixty (60) day period to renew after expiration if the applicant's failure to submit proof of completion was for good cause. For purposes of this section, "good cause" includes the following:

- (a) Serious and protracted illness of the applicant;
- (b) The death or serious and protracted illness of a member of the applicant's immediate family.

**6707            APPROVED CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND  
ACTIVITIES**

6707.1            The Board may, in its discretion, approve continuing education programs and activities that contribute to the growth of an applicant in professional competence in the practice of physical therapy and which meet the other requirements of this section.

6707.2            The Board may approve the following types of continuing education programs, if the program meets the requirements of § 6707.3:

- (a)      An undergraduate or graduate course given at an accredited college or university;
- (b)      A seminar or workshop;
- (c)      An education program given at a conference;
- (d)      In-service training;
- (e)      Home study courses; and
- (f)      Online courses.

6707.3            To qualify for approval by the Board, a continuing education program shall do the following:

- (a)      Be current in its subject matter;
- (b)      Be developed and taught by qualified individuals; and
- (c)      Meet one of the following requirements:
  - (1)      Be administered or approved by a recognized national, state or local physical therapy organization; health care organization; accredited health care facility; or an accredited college or university; or

- (2) Be submitted by the program sponsors or the applicant to the Board for review no less than sixty (60) days prior to the date of the presentation and be approved by the Board.

- 6707.4 The Board may issue and update a list of approved continuing education programs.
- 6707.5 An applicant shall have the burden of verifying whether a program is approved by the Board pursuant to this section prior to attending the program.
- 6707.6 The Board may approve the following continuing education activities by an applicant:
- (a) Serving as an instructor or speaker at a conference, seminar, workshop, or in-service training;
  - (b) Publication of an article in a professional journal or publication of a book or a chapter in a book or publication of a book review in a professional journal or bulletin; and
  - (c) Participating in research as a principal investigator or research assistant.

## **6708 CONTINUING EDUCATION CREDITS**

- 6708.1 The Board may grant continuing education credit for whole hours only, with a minimum of fifty (50) minutes constituting one (1) credit hour.
- 6708.2 For approved undergraduate or graduate courses, each semester hour of credit shall constitute fifteen (15) hours of continuing education credit, and each quarter hour of credit constitutes ten (10) hours of continuing education credit.
- 6708.3 The Board may grant a maximum of ten (10) continuing education credits per year to an applicant who attends in-service education programs.
- 6708.4 The Board may grant to an applicant who serves as an instructor or speaker at an acceptable program for both preparation and presentation time, subject to the restrictions in §§ 6708.5 through 6708.8.
- 6708.5 The maximum amount of credit that may be granted for operation time is twice the amount of the associated presentation time.
- 6708.6 The maximum amount of credit that may be granted pursuant to § 6708.4 is fifty percent (50%) of an applicant's continuing education requirement.
- 6708.7 If an applicant has previously received credit in connection with a particular presentation, the Board shall not grant credit for a subsequent presentation unless



it involves either a different subject or substantial additional research concerning the same subject.

- 6708.8 The presentation shall have been completed during the period for which credit is claimed.
- 6708.9 The Board may grant an applicant who is an author or editor of a published book four (4) units of forty (40) hours of continuing education credit, if the book has been published or accepted for publication during the period for which credit is claimed and the applicant submits proof of this fact in the application.
- 6708.10 The Board may grant an applicant who is the sole author or co-author of a published original paper, journal article or poster presentation, two (2) continuing education units or twenty (20) hours of continuing education credit, subject to the same restrictions set forth for books in § 6708.9.
- 6708.11 The Board may grant an applicant who is the sole author of a published book review, review paper, or abstract one (1) unit or ten (10) hours of continuing education credit, subject to the same restrictions set forth for books in § 6708.9.

## **6709 LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT**

- 6709.1 The Board shall issue a license by endorsement to a physical therapist who has a valid unrestricted license in good standing from another jurisdiction of the United States and who meets all other requirements of this section.
- 6709.2 An applicant for licensure as a physical therapist by endorsement shall submit with a completed application the following:
- (a) Official, certified proof of licensure as a physical therapist in good standing from another jurisdiction of the United States;
  - (b) Official, certified proof, from the body administering the examination, that the applicant has passed the Board-approved national licensure examination in physical therapy; and
  - (c) Proof pursuant to § 6702.1.
- 6709.3 After submission of the completed application and all required documentation, the Board may approve the applicant to take the District of Columbia licensure examination in physical therapy.
- 6709.4 An applicant shall take and pass the District of Columbia licensure examination in physical therapy after obtaining Board approval pursuant to § 6709.3.

**6710       LAWFUL PRACTICE**

- 6710.1       A physical therapist licensed under this act is fully authorized to practice physical therapy within the District of Columbia as defined herein.
- 6710.2       A physical therapist shall adhere to the recognized standards of ethics of the physical therapy profession and as further established by rule.
- 6710.3       A physical therapist may purchase, store and administer topical and aerosol medications as part of the practice of physical therapy as defined herein, as long as the purchasing, storage, and administration of those medications is carried out pursuant to all laws and regulations of the Federal Government and District of Columbia.
- 6710.4       A physical therapist shall use the letters “PT” in connection with the physical therapist’s name or place of business to denote licensure under the Act.
- 6710.5       Unless authorized to practice physical therapy, a person or business entity, its employees, agents or representatives shall not use in connection with that person’s name or the name or activity of the business, the words “physical therapy,” “physical therapist,” “physiotherapy,” “physiotherapist,” “registered physical therapist,” the letters “PT,” “DPT,” “LPT,” “RPT,” or any other words, abbreviations or insignia indicating or implying directly or indirectly that physical therapy is provided or supplied.
- 6710.6       A person or business entity shall not advertise or otherwise promote another person as being a “physical therapist” or “physiotherapist” unless the individual so advertised or promoted is licensed as a physical therapist under the Act.
- 6710.7       A person or business entity that offers, provides or bills any other person for services shall not characterize those services as “physical therapy” or “physiotherapy” unless the individual performing those services is a person licensed as a physical therapist under the Act.
- 6710.8       A physical therapy assistant shall use the letters “PTA” in connection with his or her name.
- 6710.9       A physical therapist shall be responsible for managing all aspects of the physical therapy care of each patient. A physical therapist shall provide:
- (a)       The initial evaluation for each patient and all supporting documentation;
  - (b)       Periodic reevaluation of each patient and all supporting documentation;  
and

- (c) The documented discharge of the patient, including the response to therapeutic intervention at the time of discharge.

6710.10 A physical therapist shall assure the qualifications of all physical therapy students, physical therapy assistants, physical therapy aides, and first-time applicants practicing pursuant to § 6711, under his or her direction and supervision.

6710.11 A physical therapist may not have more than a total of three (3) physical therapy students or physical therapy aides or physical therapy assistants or first-time applicants for a physical therapy license practicing pursuant to § 6711, under his or her direct supervision at any one time.

6710.12 A physical therapist shall review and co-sign any documentation written by a physical therapy student, physical therapy assistant, physical therapy aide, or first-time applicant for a physical therapy license practicing pursuant to § 6711.

## **6711 PRACTICE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY BY STUDENTS OR GRADUATES**

6711.1 This section shall apply to the following:

(a) Students enrolled in recognized schools or colleges as candidates for a degree in physical therapy; and

(b) Applicants for a license whose first application for a license in the District of Columbia is pending.

6711.2 A student or applicant may perform actions which require a license as a physical therapist only in accordance with the Act and this section.

6711.3 A first-time applicant for a physical therapy license may practice physical therapy under the direct supervision of a physical therapist licensed in the District of Columbia while the initial application is pending.

6711.4 A first-time applicant practicing physical therapy pursuant to § 6711.3 who fails the national examination or the District examination on the first attempt shall not thereafter continue to practice physical therapy until such time as a physical therapy license is duly issued to that individual.

6711.5 A student or applicant may practice physical therapy only under the direct supervision of a licensed physical therapist.

6711.6 A student or applicant shall identify himself or herself as a student or applicant at all times when performing actions of a physical therapist

6711.7 A physical therapist supervising a student or an applicant shall be fully responsible for all of the actions performed by the student or applicant during the time of the

supervision and is subject to disciplinary action for any violation of the Act or this chapter by the person supervised.

- 6711.8 A student may not be paid or receive compensation of any nature, directly or indirectly from a patient.
- 6711.9 A student or applicant shall be subject to all of the applicable provisions of the Act and this chapter. The Board may deny an application for a license by, or take other disciplinary action against a student or applicant who is found to have violated the Act or this chapter, in accordance with chapter 41 of this title.
- 6711.10 If the Board finds that a student or applicant has violated the Act or this chapter, the Board may, in addition to any other disciplinary actions permitted by the Act, revoke, suspend, or restrict the privilege of the student or applicant to practice.
- 6711.11 Pursuant to § 6710.12, a physical therapist shall review and co-sign any documentation written by a physical therapy student or a first-time applicant for a physical therapy license practicing pursuant to § 6711.

## **6712 PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSISTANTS AND AIDES**

- 6712.1 A physical therapy assistant or physical therapy aide may perform physical therapy functions only in accordance with this section.
- 6712.2 A physical therapist assistant may perform the following functions under the direct supervision of a physical therapist:
- (a) Use of therapeutic exercise, mechanical traction, therapeutic message, compression, heat, cold, ultraviolet, water, and electricity;
  - (b) Measurement and adjustment of crutches, canes, walkers, and wheelchairs, and instruction in their use and care;
  - (c) Instruction, motivation, an assistance to patients and others in improving pulmonary function, learning, and functional activities such as pre-ambulation, transfer, ambulation and daily living activities; and the use and care of orthoses, prostheses, and supportive devices;
  - (d) Modification of treatment procedures as indicated by patient response and within the limits specified in the plan of care, and reported orally or in writing to the physical therapist; and
  - (e) Participation in routine administrative procedures required for a physical therapy service.

6712.3 A physical therapy aide may perform the following functions under the direct supervision of a physical therapist:

- (a) Gait practice;
- (b) Activities of daily living;
- (c) Transfer activities;
- (d) Hot or cold packs;
- (e) Paraffin bath;
- (f) Hydrotherapy;
- (g) Whirlpool; and
- (h) Therapeutic exercises.

6712.4 A physical therapist assistant or physical therapy aide may not perform the following:

- (a) Interpret referrals;
- (b) Perform evaluation procedures;
- (c) Initiate or adjust treatment programs; or
- (d) Assume responsibility for planning patient care.

6712.5 Pursuant to § 6710.12, a physical therapist shall review and co-sign any documentation written by a physical therapist's assistant or physical therapist's aide.

6712.6 A physical therapist shall review and co-sign any documentation written by a physical therapy assistant or physical therapy aide.

## **6713 RESTRICTED LICENSES**

- 6713.1 Pursuant to § 514 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.14) the Board may restrict the license of any person as a condition of probation pursuant to § 514(c)(7) of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1205.14(c)(7)).

## **6714 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT**

- 6714.1 A physical therapist shall protect the patient's right to privacy by not divulging confidential information without consent of the patient or guardian unless required by law or unless, in the judgment of the physical therapist, the information is needed to protect the patient or the community.
- 6714.2 A physical therapist shall provide information about fees upon request by the patient.
- 6714.3 A physical therapist who has information of illegal or unsafe practice of physical therapy shall promptly report the information to the Board.
- 6714.4 Any holder of a license under this chapter or any person authorized to practice physical therapy or to perform physical therapy functions under this chapter shall comply with the standards of ethical and professional conduct established by the Federation of State Boards of Physical Therapy, as they may be amended or republished from time to time.

## **6715 SCOPE OF PRACTICE**

- 6715.1 A physical therapist or any person so authorized under the Act to perform physical therapy may perform the following functions:
- (a) Examining individuals with impairments, functional limitations and disabilities or other health-related conditions in order to determine a diagnosis, prognosis and course of intervention while utilizing tests and measurements consistent with the practice of physical therapy; and
  - (b) Alleviating impairment and functional limitation by designing, implementing, and modifying therapeutic interventions consistent with the practice of physical therapy.
  - (c) Preventing injury, impairment, functional limitation and disability, including the promotion and maintenance of health, wellness, fitness and quality of life in all age populations.
  - (d) Engaging in consultation, education and research.

## **6799 DEFINITIONS**

6799.1 As used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the meanings ascribed:

**Applicant** - a person applying for a license to practice physical therapy under this chapter.

**Board** - the Board of Physical Therapy, established by § 209 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 2-1202.09).

**Continuing education unit** – a unit of measurement representing ten (10) hours of continuing education credit.

**Direct supervision** - the supervision in which a physical therapist is available on the premises and within vocal communication either directly or by a communications device.

**Physical therapist** - a person licensed to practice physical therapy under the Act.

**Physical therapy aide** - a person trained by a physical therapist to perform designated routine tasks related to the operation of a physical therapy service under the direct supervision of a physical therapist.

**Physical therapy assistant** - a graduate of a physical therapy assistant program accredited by an agency recognized by the Secretary of the Department of Education or the Council of Postsecondary Accreditation who performs selected physical therapy procedures and related tasks under the direct supervision of a physical therapist.

**Practice of physical therapy** – the independent evaluation of human disability, injury, or disease by means of noninvasive tests of neuromuscular functions and other standard procedures of physical therapy, and the treatment of human disability, injury, or disease by therapeutic procedures, rendered on the prescription of or referral by a licensed physician, osteopath, dentist, or podiatrist, or by a licensed registered nurse certified to practice as an advanced registered nurse as authorized pursuant to § 601 of the Act (D.C. Official Code § 3-1206.01), embracing the specific scientific application of physical measures to secure the functional rehabilitation of the human body. These measures include the use of therapeutic exercise, therapeutic massage, heat or cold, air, light, water, electricity, or sound for the purpose of correcting or alleviating any physical or mental disability, or preventing the development of any physical or mental disability, or the performance of noninvasive tests of neuromuscular functions as an aid to the detection or treatment of any human condition.

**Restricted license** – a license upon which the board has placed any restrictions.

6799.2      The definitions in § 4099 of chapter 40 of this title are incorporated by reference into and are applicable to this chapter.